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NO 38

1/-

DESERT PATROL



ALSO ON SALE NOW
FOR WAR THRILLS . . . ACTION . . . DRAMA . . .

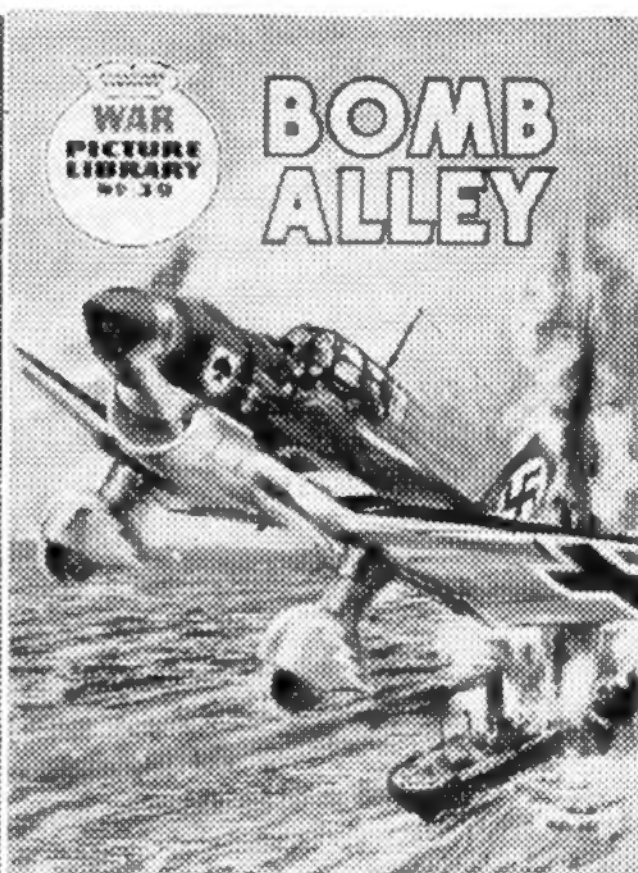
WAR PICTURE LIBRARY

No. 36—LONE COMMANDO

No.—39 BOMB ALLEY



The raid on the Norwegian coast met almost complete annihilation as the Germans poured death and destruction on the Commando invaders. Who had betrayed those brave men? That was the question Captain Mike Fairweather meant to answer.



The enemy-infested skies rained a torrent of high explosives upon the gallant little ships as they fought through to beleaguered Cos with vital men and munitions. Not a man flinched throughout that ordeal whether he sailed in warship or tramp steamer.

ALSO ON SALE NOW :—No. 37—FIRE ONE

Next month's **FOUR** thrilling **WAR PICTURE LIBRARY** titles on sale March 7th are :—

No. 40—PATHFINDER

**No. 41—RED CROSS OF
COURAGE**

No. 42—PHANTOM FORCE FIVE

**No. 43—THREE . . . TWO . . .
ONE . . . ZERO !**

DESERT PATROL

BY 1942, THE TOUGH BRITISH EIGHTH ARMY HAD ADVANCED AND RETREATED TWICE ACROSS THE BLAZING WASTES OF THE WESTERN DESERT. WEARY NOW, SHORT OF FOOD AND AMMUNITION, THEY HELD THE GAZALA LINE WEST OF TOBRUK. IN MAY, FIELD MARSHAL ROMMEL, THE DESERT FOX, STRUCK AGAIN...



Chapter 1. THE STUBBORN COLONEL

THE POWERFUL TANKS OF THE AFRIKA KORPS SMASHED GAPING HOLES IN THE RAGGED BRITISH LINES. NOW IT WAS BAYONETS AGAINST GUNS AND BARE HANDS AGAINST HEAVY ARMOUR.



OUTFLANKED AND OUTGUNNED, THE EIGHTH ARMY FELL BACK TOWARDS THE ALAMEIN LINE, LEAVING MANY PRISONERS BEHIND. BUT HERE AND THERE, ISOLATED GROUPS OF DESPERATE MEN HELD ON...



ONE GROUP, A HANDFUL OF MEN LED BY A COLONEL, DUG THEMSELVES IN ON A SHALLOW RIDGE OUTSIDE TOBRUK. ORDERS FROM HEADQUARTERS HAD SENT THEM THERE TO HOLD THE EXTREME WING OF THE BRITISH LINE.

KEEP THAT LINE STRAIGHT, MEN! SERGEANT, IS THE WIRELESS FUNCTIONING YET?

NO, SIR! WE CAN'T MAKE CONTACT WITH H.Q.!



Desert Patrol

NOW THEY WERE ALONE AND OUT OF TOUCH. THE ENEMY WERE CLOSING IN. BUT THE COLONEL HAD RECEIVED HIS ORDERS AND WITH RIGID DISCIPLINE HE WOULD CARRY THEM OUT...

VERY GOOD, SERGEANT! OUR ORDERS ARE TO HOLD THIS RIDGE TO THE LAST MAN! THAT IS WHAT WE SHALL DO!

YES, SIR!

YET EVEN AS THE COLONEL SPOKE, A PAIR OF POWERFUL FIELD GLASSES WERE TRAINED ON HIM FROM THE BROODING DESERT!

THE EYES WHICH WATCHED THE COLONEL WERE AS KEEN AS THOSE OF A DESERT HAWK—BUT THEY WERE FRIENDLY. CAPTAIN BILL MACDONALD, LEADER OF PATROL Q1 OF THE LONG RANGE DESERT GROUP, LOWERED HIS FIELD GLASSES....

THEY'RE BRITISH! AND DIGGING IN, TOO, THE CRAZY FOOLS!



THE L.R.D.G. WAS FEARED WITH GOOD REASON BY THE GERMANS. IN FAST, HEAVILY ARMED TRUCKS, THEIR TOUGH PATROLS PENETRATED DEEP INTO THE DESERT AND HARRIED THE AFRIKA KORPS FAR BEHIND THE FRONT LINE. SWIFTLY AND SAVAGELY THEY WOULD STRIKE, AND THEN SLIP BACK LIKE GHOSTS INTO THE WASTES OF SAND.



THEIR POWERFUL ENGINES ROARING,
THE SIX TRUCKS RACED ALONG THE
RIDGE TOWARDS THE LONELY
GROUP OF BRITISH SOLDIERS...



THE COLONEL STOOD RIGIDLY TO ATTENTION AS THE SAND-GRIMED TRUCKS SHUDDERED TO A HALT...

HEY, WHAT ARE THESE MEN DIGGING... THEIR GRAVES?

I BEG YOUR PARDON, SIR?



THE COLONEL'S GREY EYES SNAPPED FROSTILY AT THE BEARDED AND GRIMY FIGURE WHICH LEAPED FROM THE LEADING TRUCK!

BILL MACDONALD, COLONEL, OF PATROL Q-ONE, LONG RANGE DESERT GROUP. I'M A CAPTAIN, IF YOU THINK THAT'S IMPORTANT!

I AM COLONEL HARRIS! WHO, MAY I ASK, ARE YOU?





THE COLONEL LISTENED UNMOVINGLY. HE HAD BEEN CUT OFF BY THE SWIFT GERMAN ADVANCE, BUT HIS DUTY WAS CLEAR...

MY LAST ORDERS WERE TO HOLD THIS RIDGE, CAPTAIN! I AM A SOLDIER! I SHALL DO MY DUTY!



WITH A GRIM SHRUG OF HIS SHOULDERS, BILL MACDONALD TURNED BACK TO HIS TRUCK. HE HAD DONE ALL HE COULD...

I'D LIKE TO STAY FOR THE PARTY, COLONEL, BUT I'VE GOT ORDERS AS WELL! GOOD LUCK!



LOOKING BACK AT THAT HANDFUL OF BRAVE AND STUBBORN MEN; THE TOUGH DESERT CAPTAIN RAISED HIS HAND IN SALUTE! THEY WERE WAITING, HE KNEW, FOR DEATH...

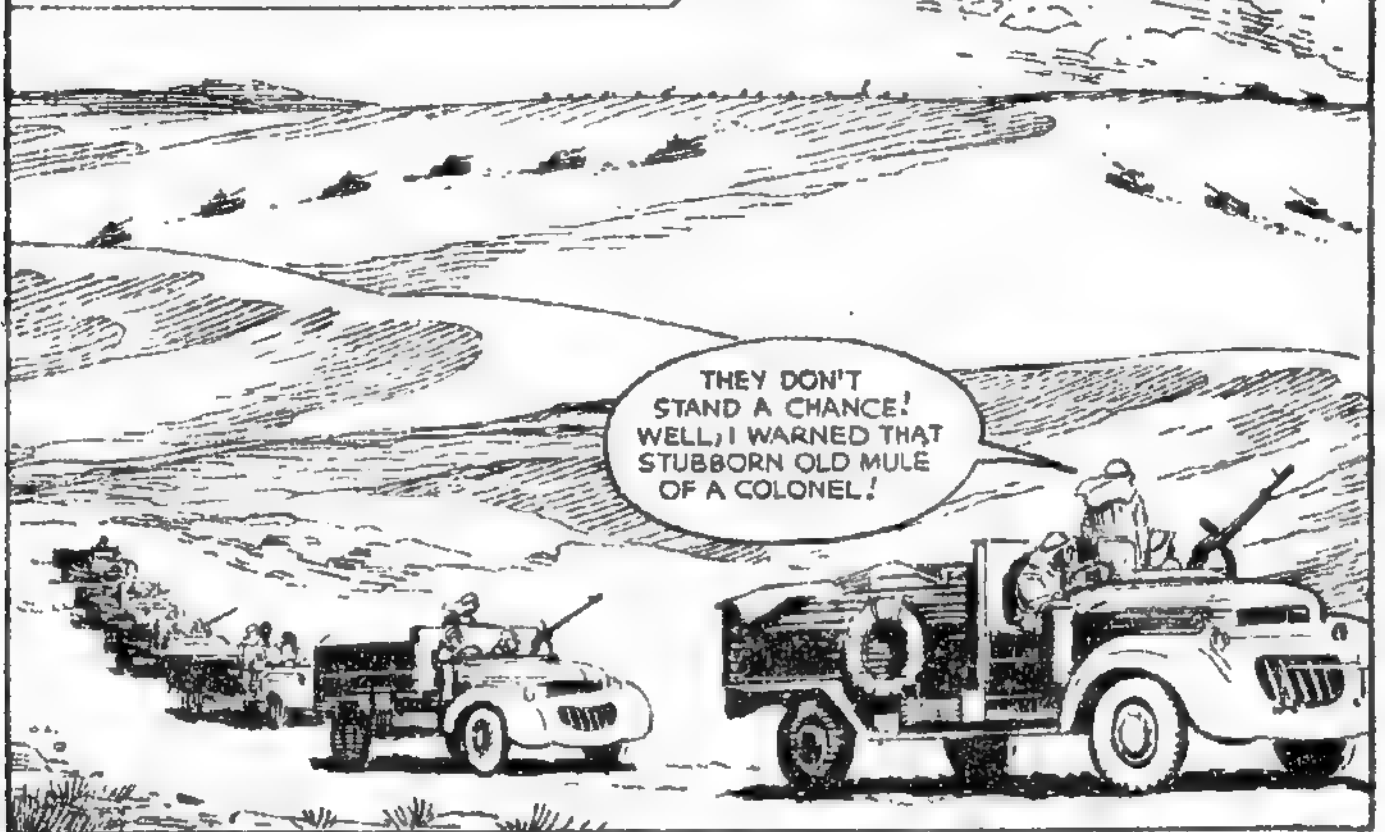


THE 3-CWT TRUCKS SURGED AWAY ACROSS THE SHIFTING SAND. KEEN EYES SEARCHED THE BARREN HORIZON. SUDDENLY THE SERGEANT STIFFENED AT BILL MACDONALD'S SIDE...



Desert Patrol

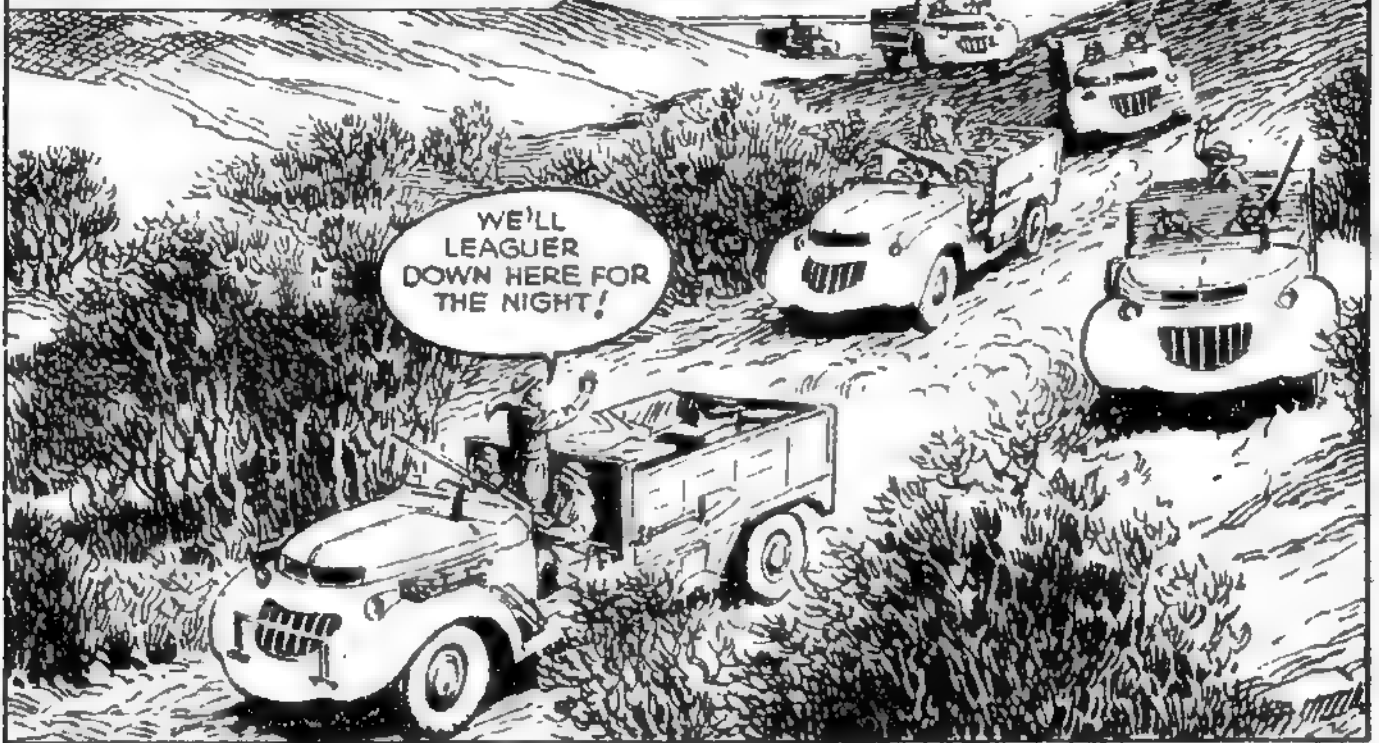
FAR AWAY ACROSS THE DESERT, A SCORE OF GERMAN TANKS WERE CLOSING IN LIKE DEADLY BLACK SCORPIONS ON THE TINY GROUP OF BRITISH SOLDIERS...



HARD-EYED, BILL MACDONALD SAW THE FIRST SHELLBURSTS HIT THE FOXHOLES ON THE RIDGE. HIS VOICE WAS BITTER...



SOON THE VICIOUS SOUNDS OF THAT ONE-SIDED BATTLE HAD DIED AWAY IN THE DISTANCE. ALL THAT DAY, THE SIX TRUCKS HEADED WESTWARD INTO THE HEART OF ENEMY TERRITORY. AS NIGHT FELL...



FAR BEHIND THE ENEMY LINES, THE DESERT PATROL SETTLED DOWN FOR THE NIGHT IN A PATCH OF THORN SCRUB...

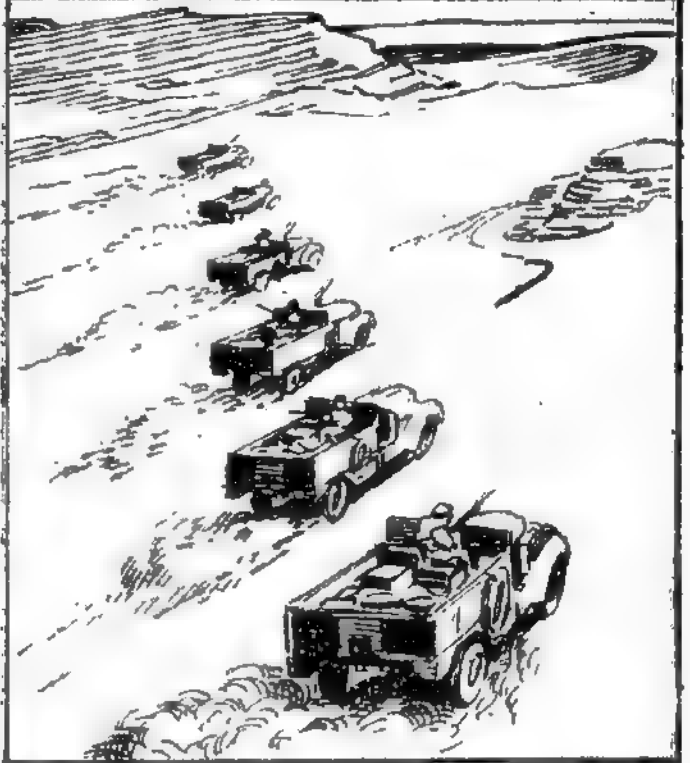


LIEUTENANT SAM HARPER, THE PATROL'S SECOND-IN-COMMAND, KNEW FROM THE BITTERNESS IN HIS LEADER'S VOICE THAT HE, TOO, WAS THINKING OF THE TRAGEDY THEY HAD WITNESSED THAT DAY. BUT THERE WAS NO TURNING BACK NOW AND AT FIRST LIGHT OF MORNING...



SHAKE IT UP THERE, MEN! WE'VE GOT THREE HUNDRED MILES TO GO YET!

THEIR DESTINATION LAY WEST OF BENGHAZI, FIVE HUNDRED MILES BEHIND THE GERMAN LINES! FOR THREE DAYS THE TRUCKS PLOUGHED ON ACROSS THE DESERT WASTES. AT ALL COSTS THEY HAD TO KEEP MOVING...



ONCE A TRUCK LOST MOMENTUM, THE SOFT SAND CLOGGED THE WHEELS AND THE VEHICLE WAS BOGGED DOWN. THE OTHER TRUCKS DARED NOT STOP TO HELP.



SHE'S STUCK!
OUT SPADES,
AND HURRY!

Desert Patrol

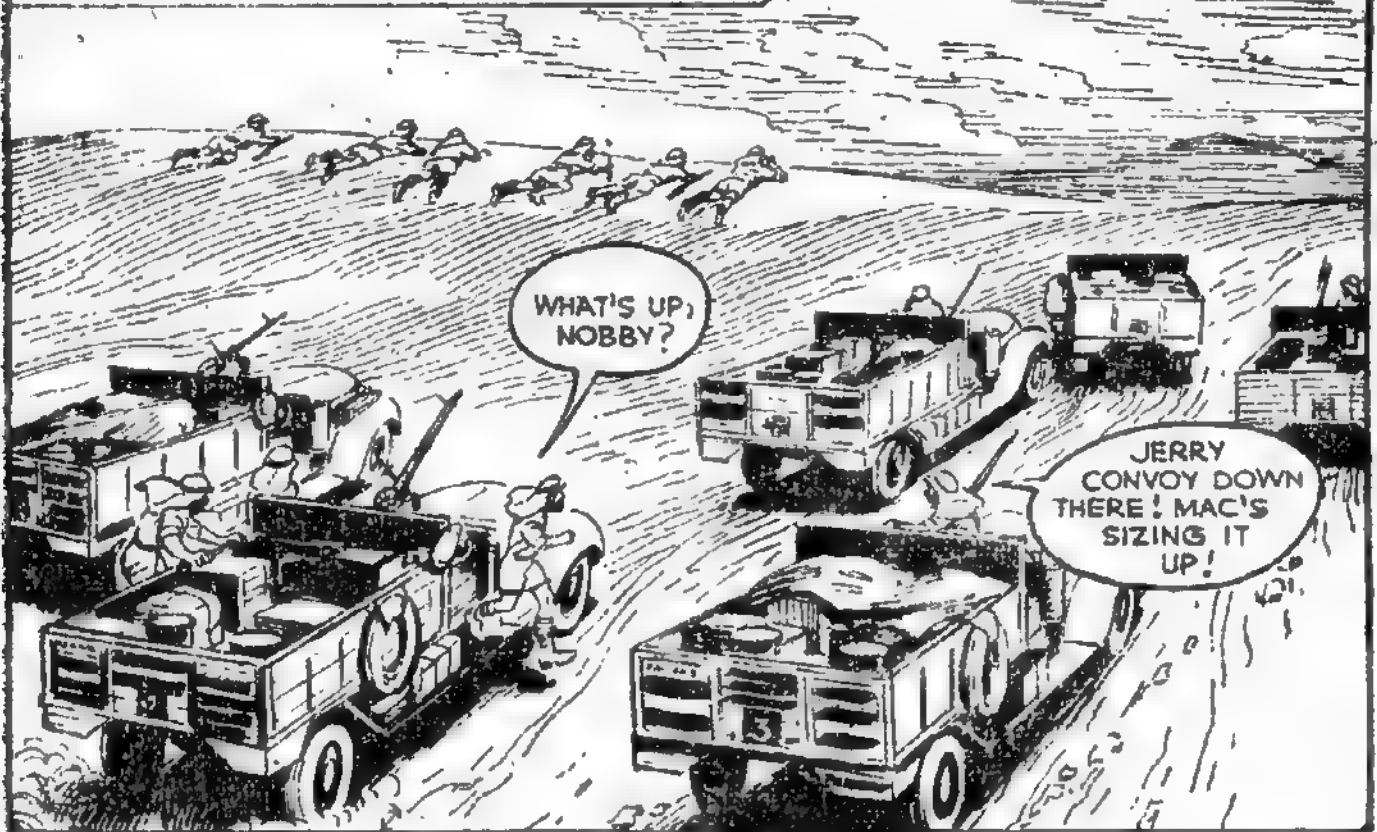
THE MEN HAD TO DIG AND HEAVE FRANTICALLY IN THE AWFUL HEAT OF THE DESERT SUN, UNTIL THE SPINNING WHEELS GOT A GRIP ON THE TREACHEROUS SAND...



SWEATING AND EXHAUSTED, THE MEN PLUNGED THEMSELVES ON THE MOVING TRUCK AS IT RACED TO CATCH UP WITH THE PATROL...



BUT AHEAD, ON THE EDGE OF THE SAND RIDGE, THE PATROL HAD HALTED AT AN EXULTANT SHOUT FROM THE LOOK-OUT IN THE LEADING TRUCK...



FAR BELOW IN A CHOKING CLOUD OF DUST, A GERMAN CONVOY WAS BUMPING TOWARDS TRIPOLI. THE GUARDS LOLLED LAZILY... THEY WERE FOUR HUNDRED MILES INSIDE THEIR OWN TERRITORY, WHAT HAD THEY TO FEAR IN THIS EMPTY DESERT?



Desert Patrol

BUT THE DESERT WAS NOT EMPTY! KEEN EYES WERE WATCHING THEM FROM ABOVE, A STEEL HARD VOICE WAS GIVING THE ORDER TO PREPARE FOR ATTACK!

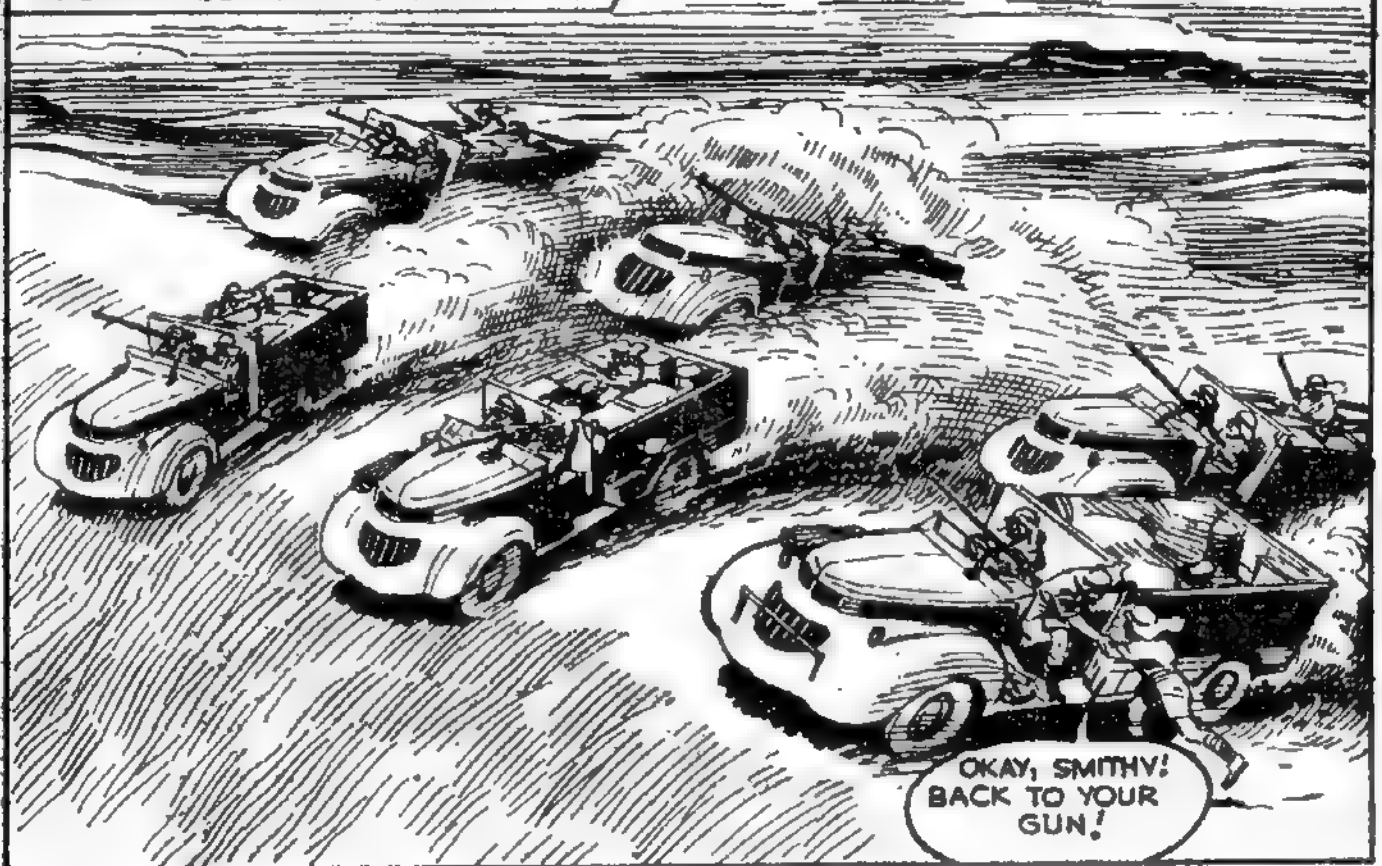
RIGHT, MEN! YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO! START ROLLING WHEN I GIVE THE SIGNAL!



MAC WAITED UNTIL THE GERMAN LORRIES WERE NEARLY ABREAST OF HIS POSITION. THEN HE DROPPED HIS ARM... AND THE SHATTERING ROAR OF THE SIX MOTORS BLASTED THE DESERT SILENCE!



THE TRUCKS SURGED TOWARDS THE RIDGE WITH SLAMMING GEARS...



FAR BELOW, A GERMAN SOLDIER YAWNED COMFORTABLY AND GLANCED AT THE SANDY SLOPE. WHAT WERE THOSE SIX SPECKS HIGHER UP, HE WONDERED LAZILY... THEY WERE MOVING... SUDDENLY HE WAS BELLOWING!

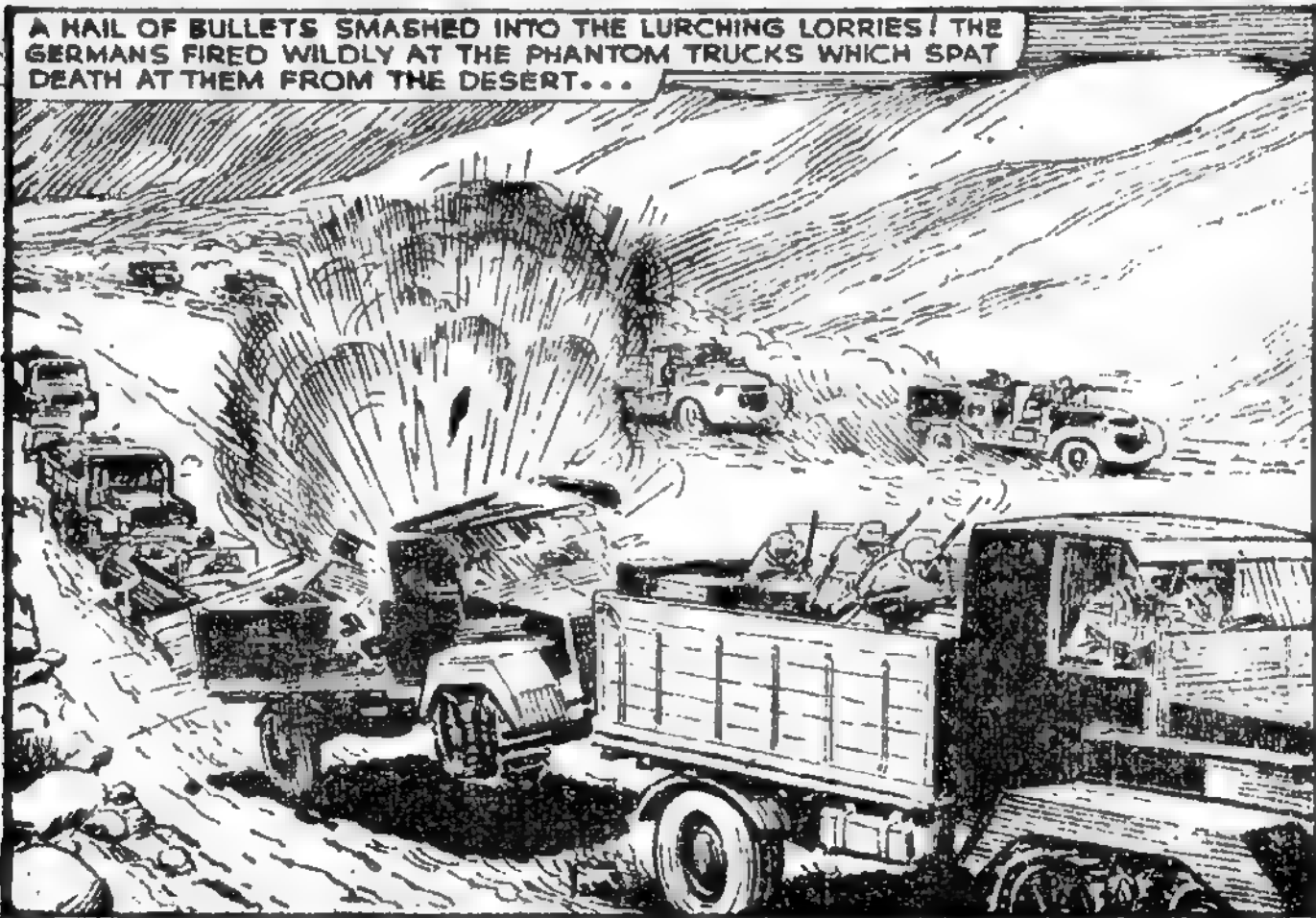


THE HEADLONG RUSH OF THE VICIOUSLY ARMED L.R.D.G. PATROL CAUGHT THE GERMANS OFF THEIR GUARD! THEY WERE STILL GROPING FRANTICALLY FOR THEIR WEAPONS WHEN...

LET 'EM HAVE IT!

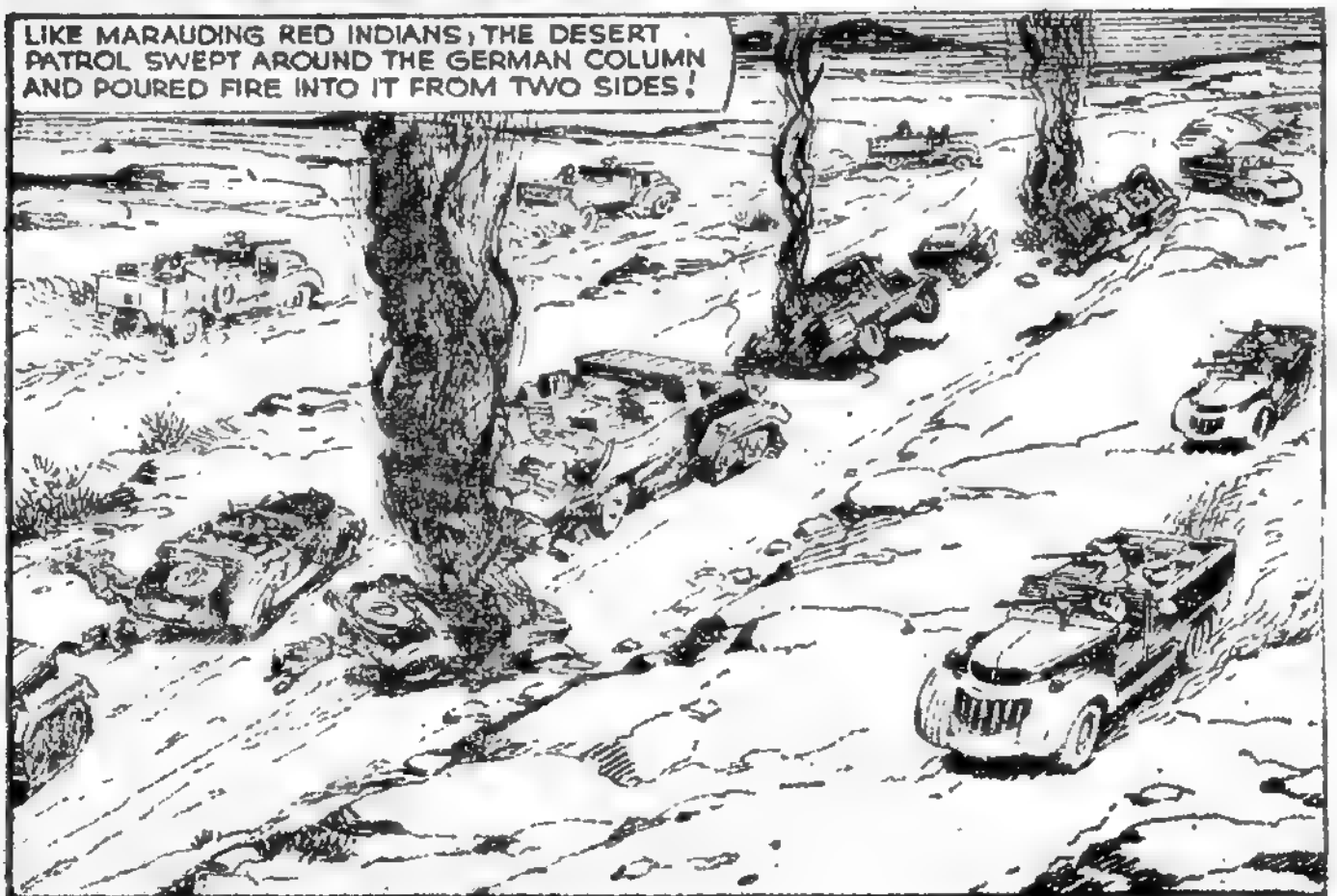


A HAIL OF BULLETS SMASHED INTO THE LURCHING LORRIES! THE GERMANS FIRED WILDLY AT THE PHANTOM TRUCKS WHICH SPAT DEATH AT THEM FROM THE DESERT...





LIKE MARAUDING RED INDIANS, THE DESERT PATROL SWEEPED AROUND THE GERMAN COLUMN AND POURED FIRE INTO IT FROM TWO SIDES!



CROUCHED OVER HIS CHATTERING MACHINE GUN IN THE LEADING TRUCK, SERGEANT SMITH SAW AN ODD FIGURE IN THE GERMAN STAFF CAR....



IN TEN TERRIBLE MINUTES THE GERMAN CONVOY HAD BEEN SHATTERED AND THE BLAZING GUNS OF PATROL QI FELL SILENT...

CEASE FIRE!



CAPTAIN BILL MACDONALD HEADED CURIOUSLY FOR THE STAFF CAR AND THE MAN WHO HAD SAT UNFLINCHING IN IT THROUGHOUT THE BATTLE...

JEEPERS...
COLONEL HARRIS!

SO IT'S
THE RUDE
YOUNG CAPTAIN!
CONGRATULATIONS
ON A WELL-FOUGHT
ACTION!



Desert Patrol

THE STIFF, SOLDIERLY FIGURE WAS SOILED AND BLOODSTAINED, BUT THE VOICE WAS AS STERN AS EVER...

SO THEY TOOK YOU PRISONER, COLONEL! I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU... BUT WHY DIDN'T YOU TAKE COVER WHEN WE ATTACKED?

I WAS ON PAROLE, CAPTAIN! I HAD GIVEN MY WORD I WOULD NOT TRY TO ESCAPE... EVEN YOUR BULLETS WOULD NOT MAKE ME BREAK MY WORD!

THOUGH THE MEN OF THE L.R.D.G. DESPISED CONVENTION, THEY COULD RESPECT COURAGE!

PHEW, HE'S A STIFF-NECKED OLD SON OF A GUN... BUT HE'S GOT GUTS!



Chapter 2.

MARBLE ARCH

NOW THE VICIOUS LITTLE ACTION WAS OVER...AND THE TOUGH DESERT PATROL PREPARED TO MOVE ON...

THESE JERRIES WILL HAVE TO WALK! WE CAN'T TAKE PRISONERS! GET ROLLING, MEN!



SITTING IN BILL MACDONALD'S TRUCK, THE STERN OLD COLONEL BEGAN TO TALK...

THEY WERE TAKING ME BACK TO TRIPOLI FOR SHIPMENT TO A PRISONER-OF-WAR CAGE IN ITALY! THANK YOU, CAPTAIN; I'M GLAD OF THIS CHANCE TO GO ON FIGHTING!

I'M GLAD TOO, COLONEL! I'D GIVEN YOU UP FOR DEAD FOUR DAYS AGO AT TOBRUK!



THERE WAS BITTERNESS IN THE GRIM VOICE... THE BITTERNESS OF DEFEAT!

WE HELD OUT AS LONG AS WE COULD! IT WAS HOPELESS, AS YOU WARNED ME, BUT I HAD MY ORDERS! IF I HADN'T BEEN KNOCKED UNCONSCIOUS BY THAT SHELL...

TAKE IT EASY, COLONEL...

WITH AN EFFORT, COLONEL HARRIS STRAIGHTENED HIS SHOULDERS. WHEN HE SPOKE AGAIN HIS VOICE WAS CALM.

ALL RIGHT, CAPTAIN, I SHAN'T SPEAK OF IT AGAIN! ARE YOU HEADING BACK FOR ALEX?

WE'VE WORK TO DO YET, COLONEL! YOU'LL HAVE TO COME WITH US! I'M AFRAID!

PATROL QI STILL HAD ITS MISSION TO CARRY OUT. THE SIX STURDY TRUCKS ROLLED ON DEEPER INTO THE DESERT.



AT NIGHTFALL, THE PATROL
LEAGUERED DOWN IN
THE OPEN DESERT...



WE'RE HEADING FOR MARBLE ARCH! IT'S
A POINT ON THE MAIN JERRY SUPPLY ROAD
TWO HUNDRED MILES WEST OF BENGHAZI! THERE'S
A HIDEOUT THERE WHERE L.R.D.G. PATROLS
KEEP A CONSTANT WATCH ON JERRY TROOP
MOVEMENTS AND RADIO REPORTS
BACK TO CAIRO!



THE COLONEL LISTENED WITH RAISED EYEBROWS TO THE MATTER-OF-FACT VOICE OF THE YOUNG CAPTAIN...

YOU MEAN YOU SIT OUT THERE, SIX HUNDRED MILES BEHIND THE ENEMY LINES, AND A COUPLE OF HUNDRED YARDS FROM THE ENEMY!

THAT'S IT, COLONEL! TWO WEEKS OF IT, THEN FIVE WEEKS' DESERT TREK BACK TO CAIRO! IT'S AS BORING AS THE DEVIL, BUT SOMEONE'S GOT TO DO IT!

THIS WAS NOT THE SORT OF WAR THE COLONEL HAD BEEN TAUGHT TO FIGHT THIRTY YEARS AGO AT SANDHURST!

IT'S A CURIOUS SORT OF WAR, THIS, ISN'T IT, CAPTAIN?

I WOULDN'T KNOW, COLONEL! IT'S THE FIRST WAR I'VE FOUGHT! WELL, I SUPPOSE WE'D BETTER TURN IN...

AS DAWN BROKE OVER THE WASTE OF SAND, THE DESERT PATROL STIRRED ITSELF. COLONEL HARRIS BEGAN TO SHAVE, WATCHED BY A DERISIVE SERGEANT SMITH...

WE DON'T SHAVE IN THIS OUTFIT, COLONEL, BEGGING YOUR PARDON!

SO I'VE NOTICED, SERGEANT!



WHEN THE COLONEL JOINED BILL MACDONALD IN THE TRUCK LATER, HIS FACE WAS CLEAN-SHAVEN... AND PROSTY!

I DON'T WANT TO MAKE TROUBLE, CAPTAIN, BUT FOR THE SAKE OF DISCIPLINE I OUGHT TO REPORT THAT ONE OF YOUR MEN WAS INSOLENT TO ME THIS MORNING!

OH YES, THAT WAS SMITHY, COLONEL! HE TOLD ME ABOUT IT!

MAC KNEW THAT THE UNCONVENTIONAL WAYS OF THE L.R.D.G. MUST SEEM ODD TO THE STERN OLD SOLDIER! BUT HE MEANT TO KEEP THE PEACE...

I OUGHT TO EXPLAIN, COLONEL, THAT WE DON'T SHAVE ON PATROL BECAUSE OUR WATER RATION PER DAY IS FOUR PINTS PER MAN!

I SEE, CAPTAIN! SERGEANT SMITH SHOULD HAVE EXPLAINED HIMSELF! HOWEVER, I TAKE IT YOU HAVE NO OBJECTION IF I KEEP MYSELF CLEAN WITH MY RATION OF WATER, RATHER THAN DRINK IT?

THE COLONEL, IT WAS OBVIOUS, THOROUGHLY DISAPPROVED OF THE LONG RANGE DESERT PATROL.

NO OBJECTION AT ALL, COLONEL! BUT YOU MAY CHANGE YOUR MIND WHEN YOU'VE LIVED IN THE DESERT FOR SIX WEEKS!

I SHALL NOT CHANGE MY MIND, CAPTAIN! IT IS A SOLDIER'S DUTY TO KEEP HIMSELF CLEAN!

Desert Patrol

FOR THREE MORE SEARING DAYS UNDER THE DESERT SUN, Q1 PATROL HEADED WESTWARDS. THEN...

WE'RE
APPROACHING
MARBLE ARCH,
MEN! NO TALKING
FROM NOW
ON!



MARBLE ARCH WAS JUST A HEAP OF BARREN ROCKS IN THE DESERT. FROM HERE, THE INTREPID PATROLS OF THE L.R.D.G. KEPT CONSTANT WATCH ON THE UNSUSPECTING ENEMY SIX HUNDRED MILES BEHIND THE FRONT LINE!



QI PATROL HAD REACHED THEIR DESTINATION AT LAST...

OKAY, SIMON, WE'LL TAKE OVER NOW! ANY EXCITEMENT?

DULL AS DITCHWATER, MAC! THERE ARE PLENTY OF JERRIES HEADING FOR THE FRONT, THOUGH! MAYBE WE'LL BE ABLE TO PRANG A FEW ON OUR WAY BACK... I NEED A BIT OF ACTION!



THE MEN'S VOICES WERE CASUAL AND EASY... YET IN THIS PLACE, DEATH WAS NEVER MORE THAN FIVE HUNDRED YARDS AWAY...

SO LONG, SIMON! GIVE MY LOVE TO CAIRO!

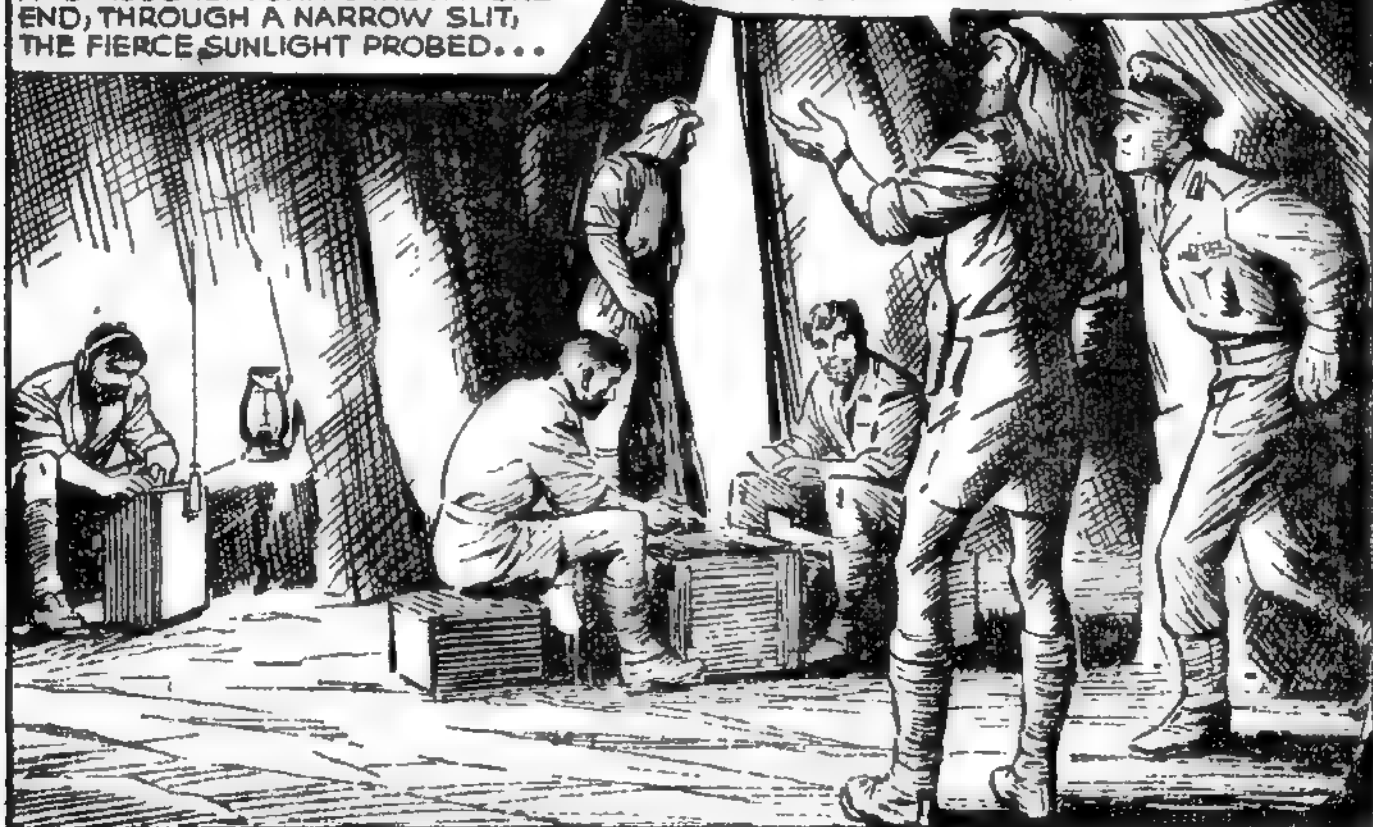
CHEERIO, MAC! KEEP OUT OF MISCHIEF!





DEEP IN THE HEART OF THE ROCKY BLUFF, A CAVE HAD BEEN HOLLOWED OUT AND ROUGHLY FURNISHED. AT ONE END, THROUGH A NARROW SLIT, THE FIERCE SUNLIGHT PROBED...

THIS IS IT, COLONEL! THE JERRIES ARE JUST OVER A QUARTER OF A MILE AWAY ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT ROCK!



AND BEYOND THAT NARROW SLIT, SO NEAR THAT THEIR VOICES COULD BE HEARD BY THE HIDDEN WATCHERS, PASSED THE UNSUSPECTING GERMAN AFRIKA KORPS...



COLONEL HARRIS WATCHED THE ENEMY FOR A LONG TIME. WHEN HE SPOKE, HIS VOICE WAS PUZZLED AND UNEASY...

IT'S AN
ODD WAY TO
FIGHT A WAR,
CAPTAIN!

YOU'LL GET
USED TO IT,
COLONEL!



Chapter 3. NO DISCIPLINE

IN THE DAYS WHICH FOLLOWED, THE COLONEL FRETTED. THE EASY WAYS OF THE DESERT PATROL RUBBED ON HIS RIGID MILITARY NERVES!

CAPTAIN,
THIS IS JUST NOT
GOOD ENOUGH! THESE
MEN ARE LYING ABOUT,
PLAYING CARDS. IT'S...
IT'S UNMILITARY!

WHAT DO
YOU SUGGEST
THEY DO, COLONEL?
POLISH THE TRUCKS
...SO THE JERRIES
CAN SEE THEM
GLEAMING FROM
THE AIR!



THE PATROL LEADER'S SARCASTIC ANSWER BROUGHT AN ANGRY FLUSH TO THE COLONEL'S FACE. HE TURNED ON HIS HEEL AS MAC GOT UP TO ENTER THE CAVE...

ANYTHING
HAPPENING
OUT THERE?

THE ROAD'S
BEEN CLEAR FOR
TEN MINUTES, MAC,
BUT THERE ARE A
LOT OF SCOUTS
NIPPING ABOUT.
SOMETHING'S
UP, I THINK!



LIEUTENANT HARPER WAS ON WATCH... AND SOMETHING WAS PUZZLING HIM. MAC HAD JOINED HIM AT THE PEEPHOLE WHEN AN URGENT VOICE CALLED HIM...



CURSING THE OBSTINATE OLD SOLDIER UNDER HIS BREATH, BILL MACDONALD FOLLOWED THE CORPORAL.



OUTSIDE IN THE HARSH DESERT GLARE, AN ASTONISHING SIGHT MET BILL MACDONALD'S EYES! BUT AT THAT MOMENT...

DOWN, MEN,
DOWN!



THE MEN FELL FLAT AS, WITH A SHATTERING ROAR, THREE MESSERSCHMITTS SWOOPED OVER THE CLEARING...

GET DOWN,
YOU FOOL!



SHARP EYES IN ONE OF THE GERMAN FIGHTERS HAD SEEN THE COLONEL'S ERECT FIGURE BELOW! BUT BY THE TIME THE ENEMY PATROL HAD TURNED...

BEIZERHUNG!
I THOUGHT I SAW
A MAN STANDING
DOWN THERE, BUT
IT MUST HAVE
BEEN A ROCK!

THE MESSERSCHMITTS WHINED AWAY IN A CLIMBING TURN. LYING IN THE DUST, THE ANGRY COLONEL WAS PEREMPTORILY SILENCED BY A GRIM CAPTAIN MACDONALD!

CAPTAIN,
WHAT THE
DEVIL...

KEEP DOWN!

THE LEADER OF THE DESERT PATROL
SPOKE WITH DEADLY QUIETNESS...

IF THOSE
JERRY PLANES SPOT
US IT'LL BE KAPUT FOR
QI PATROL! THAT'LL BE
BAD FOR US, COLONEL, BUT
IT'LL BE WORSE FOR
HEADQUARTERS IN CAIRO!
THIS ROAD WATCH
IS THE EYES OF THE
EIGHTH ARMY!

IT HAD BEEN A CLOSE SHAVE
... THE COLONEL AND THE
YOUNG L.R.D.G. CAPTAIN
STOOD UP AND GLARED
AT EACH OTHER...

ALL CLEAR, MEN!
GET BACK TO COVER!
NOW, COLONEL, YOU
OWE ME AN
EXPLANATION!

THE DEVIL,
I DO, CAPTAIN!
LET ME TELL
YOU...

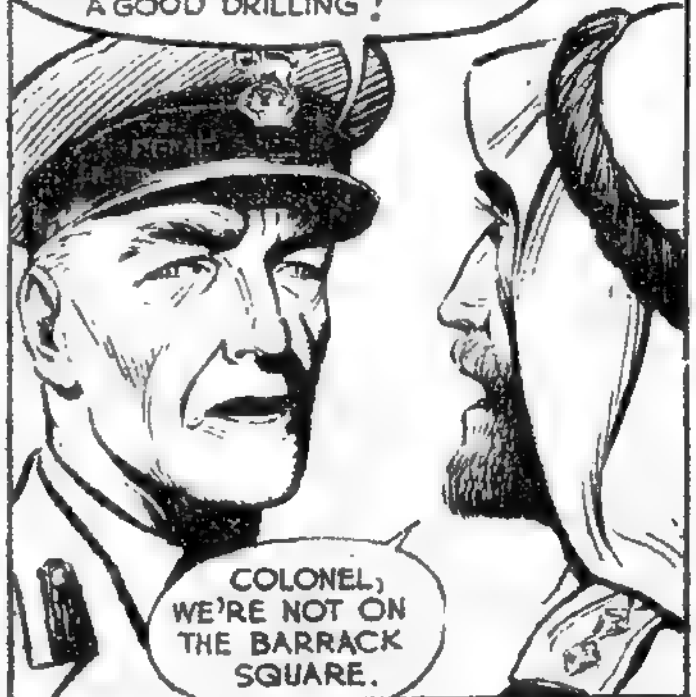
MAC'S VOICE HAD AN UNFAMILIAR RASP OF AUTHORITY IN IT...



LET ME TELL YOU, COLONEL, THAT I'M IN COMMAND OF THIS UNIT! YOU ARE UNDER MY ORDERS UNTIL WE REACH CAIRO! AND YOU WILL NOT INTERFERE WITH MY MEN!

BUT THE COLONEL'S DETESTATION OF THE IRREGULAR WAYS OF THE DESERT PATROL HAD BEEN GROWING FOR DAYS...

YOUR MEN ARE A DISGRACE TO THE ARMY, CAPTAIN! THEY'RE DIRTY AND SLACK! THEY'RE NOT SOLDIERS; THEY'RE RUFFIANS! WHAT THEY NEED IS A GOOD DRILLING!



COLONEL, WE'RE NOT ON THE BARRACK SQUARE.

IT WAS A BITTER CLASH BETWEEN THE RIGID CONVENTIONAL SOLDIER AND THE TOUGH DESERT FIGHTER OF AN ALL-OUT MODERN WAR...



YOU'VE SEEN MY MEN FIGHTING, COLONEL! THAT'S WHAT THEY JOINED THE L.R.D.G. TO DO... TO FIGHT THE HEAT AND THE SAND AND THE GERMANS! THEY LIVE HARD. AND THEY FIGHT HARD, AND OFTEN THEY DIE! AND THEY LEAVE THE NICE CLEAN UNIFORMS TO THE DESK WALLAHS IN CAIRO!

MAC! HEY, MAC!

Desert Patrol

A SHOUT FROM LIEUTENANT HARPER INTERRUPTED THE TWO ANGRY MEN. SOMETHING WAS HAPPENING ON THE GERMAN SUPPLY ROAD...

TAKE A LOOK AT THAT ROAD...



BILL MACDONALD PEERED CAUTIOUSLY THROUGH THE NARROW SLIT. HE GAVE A GASP OF SURPRISE!



THE GUNS LUMBERING PAST FIVE HUNDRED YARDS AWAY, THEIR WICKED BARRELS CAMOUFLAGED, WERE THE AFRIKA KORPS' NEWEST AND DEADLIEST WEAPON!

THEY LOOK LIKE '88 MILLIMETRE GUNS TO ME... AND SELF-PROPELLED, TOO! THOSE THINGS WILL MAKE A MESS OF OUR TANKS IF THEY GET AMONGST THEM! GET A MESSAGE THROUGH TO CAIRO, SMITHY, AT ONCE!

RIGHT!

THE MORSE KEY RATTLED... WITHIN AN HOUR, A MESSAGE HAD COME BACK FROM HEADQUARTERS. IT WAS TERSE... AND IT PROMISED VIOLENT ACTION!

MESSAGE FORM A/3 86
5/40
MACDONALD - PATROL Q1 - WHEN RELIEVED, SHADOW GUN CONVOY AND ATTACK AT EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY - GUNS MUST BE DESTROYED BEFORE THEY REACH FIGHTING LINE -
HQ CAIRO

NEXT DAY, A RELIEF FOR PATROL Q1 APPEARED AT MARBLE ARCH. BILL MACDONALD AND HIS MEN WERE READY...

WE'RE RELIEVING YOU, MAC! WHAT'S UP?

CAIRO'S FIXED UP A NICE LITTLE PARTY FOR US! WE'LL BE OFF WHEN YOU'VE TAKEN OVER!



Chapter 4. LIGHTNING RAID

ONCE AGAIN, THE DESERT MARAUDERS WERE ON THE PROWL...

PUT YOUR FOOT DOWN, SMITHY! WE MUSTN'T LOSE THAT CONVOY!



FOR TWO DAYS AND NIGHTS, PATROL Q1 SHADOWED THE GERMAN CONVOY. ON THE THIRD DAY, MAC SHOOK HIS HEAD GRIMLY...

THE CONVOY'S TOO WELL-GUARDED... WE'D NEVER GET NEAR THE GUNS IF WE ATTACKED ON THE ROAD!



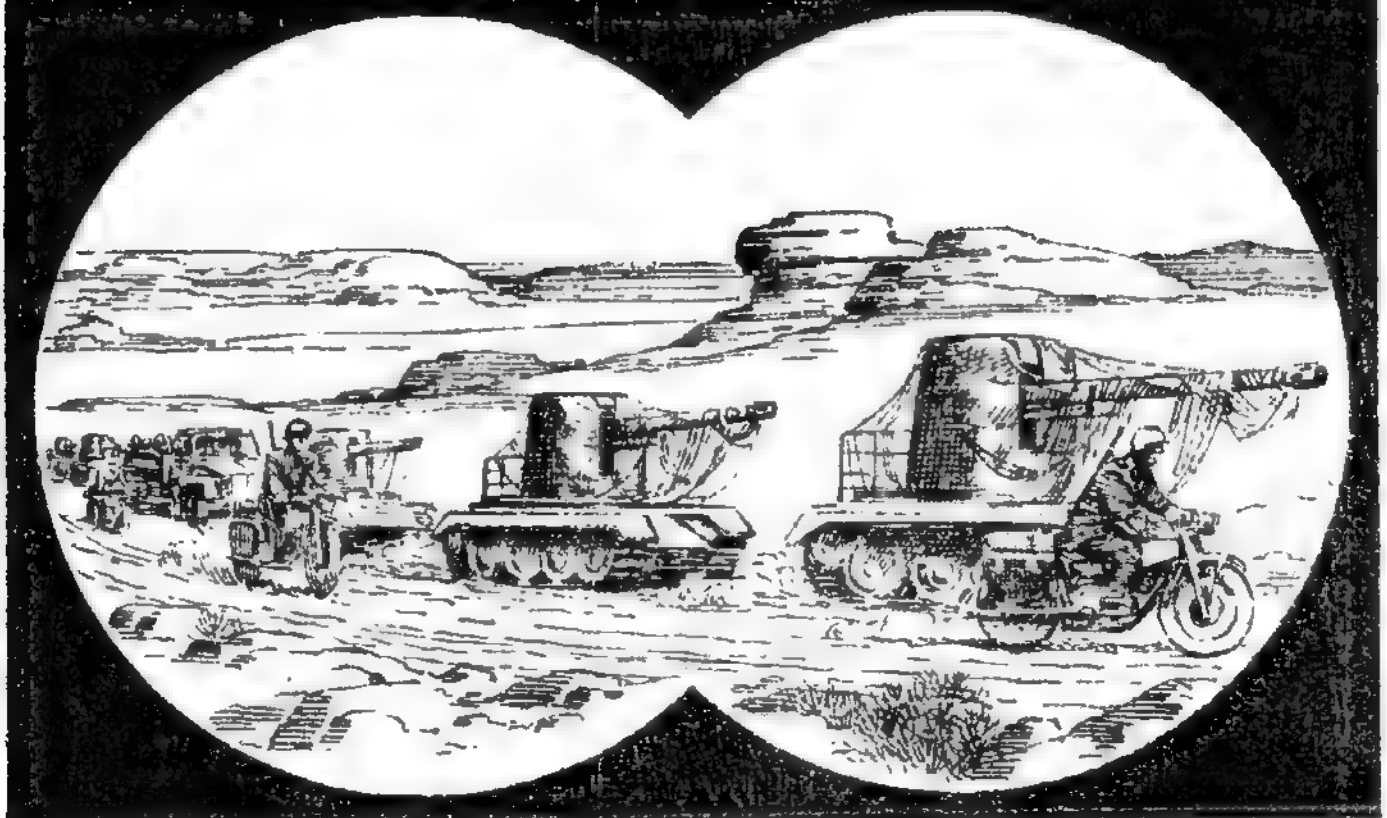
FINGERS ITCHING ON THEIR GUNS, THE DESERT PATROL FOLLOWED THE GERMAN CONVOY ACROSS THE BLAZING DESERT.

WHAT DO YOU INTEND TO DO, CAPTAIN?

WAIT UNTIL THE GUNS REACH THE BASE CAMP! THE JERRIES WILL HAVE TO CALIBRATE THEM BEFORE THEY TAKE THEM UP TO THE FRONT, AND THEY MAY RELAX THEIR GUARD ONCE THEY'RE BEHIND BARBED WIRE!



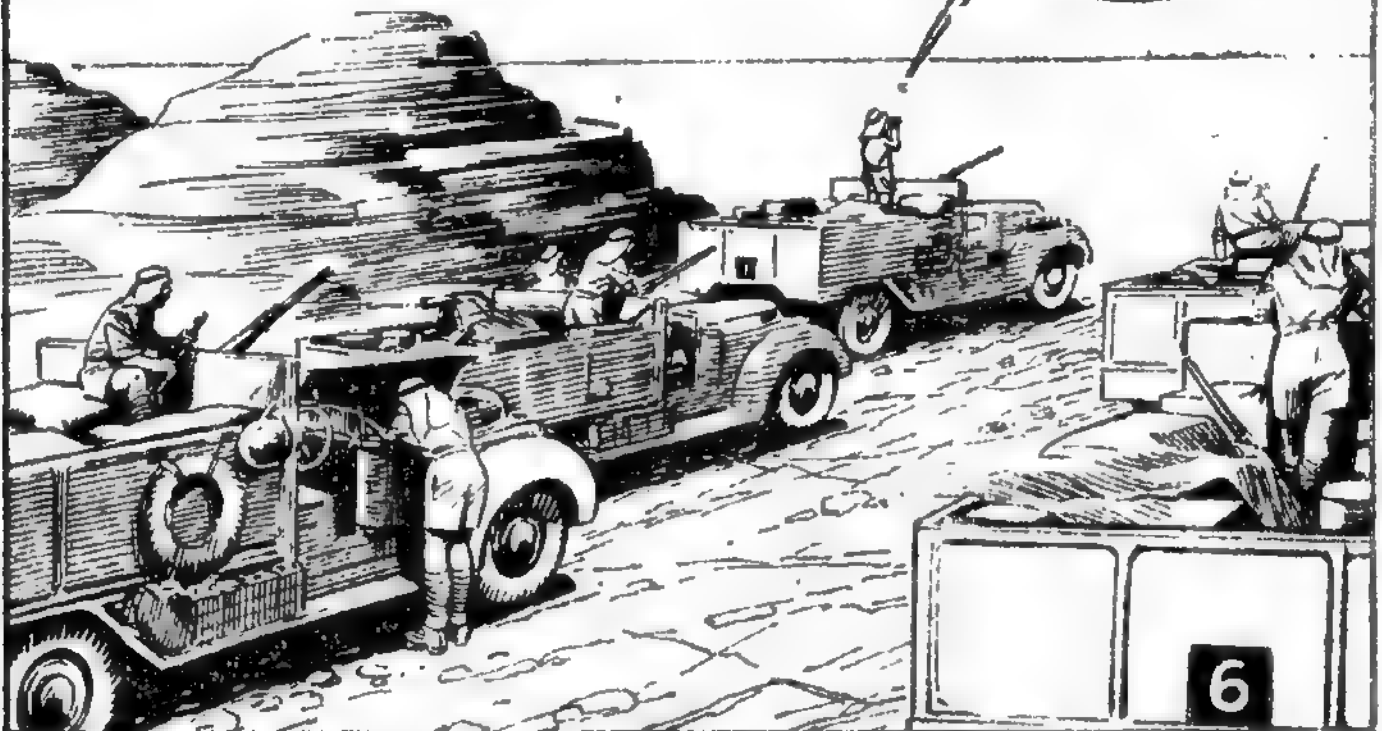
FOR SIX MORE DAYS, THE PATROL SHADOWED THE GUNS. NOW THEY WERE NEAR TOBRUK, ONLY A HUNDRED MILES FROM THE FRONT LINE...



Desert Patrol

ON THE SEVENTH DAY, FROM FAR OUT IN THE DESERT, THE WEARY BRITISH COMMANDOS SAW THE HUTS AND BARBED WIRE OF THE GERMAN BASE CAMP...

NOW THE QUESTION IS, HOW DO WE ATTACK THE CAMP?



THE MORE MAC THOUGHT OF A FRONTAL ATTACK WITH HIS SMALL PATROL ON THAT HEAVILY-ARMED CAMP, THE LESS ENTHUSIASTIC HE FELT ABOUT IT.

I DON'T LIKE IT! I DON'T LIKE IT AT ALL!

YOU DON'T THINK A FRONTAL ATTACK BY YOUR HANDFUL OF MEN WOULD REACH THE GUNS, EH, CAPTAIN? MAY I MAKE A SUGGESTION?



IT WAS THEN THAT THE COLONEL, WHO HAD BEEN SILENT EVER SINCE THE QUARREL AT MARBLE ARCH, SPOKE UP WITH A GLINT IN HIS EYE!

WELL,
THAT'S MY PLAN,
CAPTAIN! NOW
TELL ME IT'S
MAD!

IT'S MAD
ALL RIGHT,
COLONEL! BUT I
THINK IT'S THE ONLY
PLAN WHICH GIVES
US A CHANCE OF
WRECKING THOSE
GUNS! LET'S GET
CRACKING ON
IT NOW!



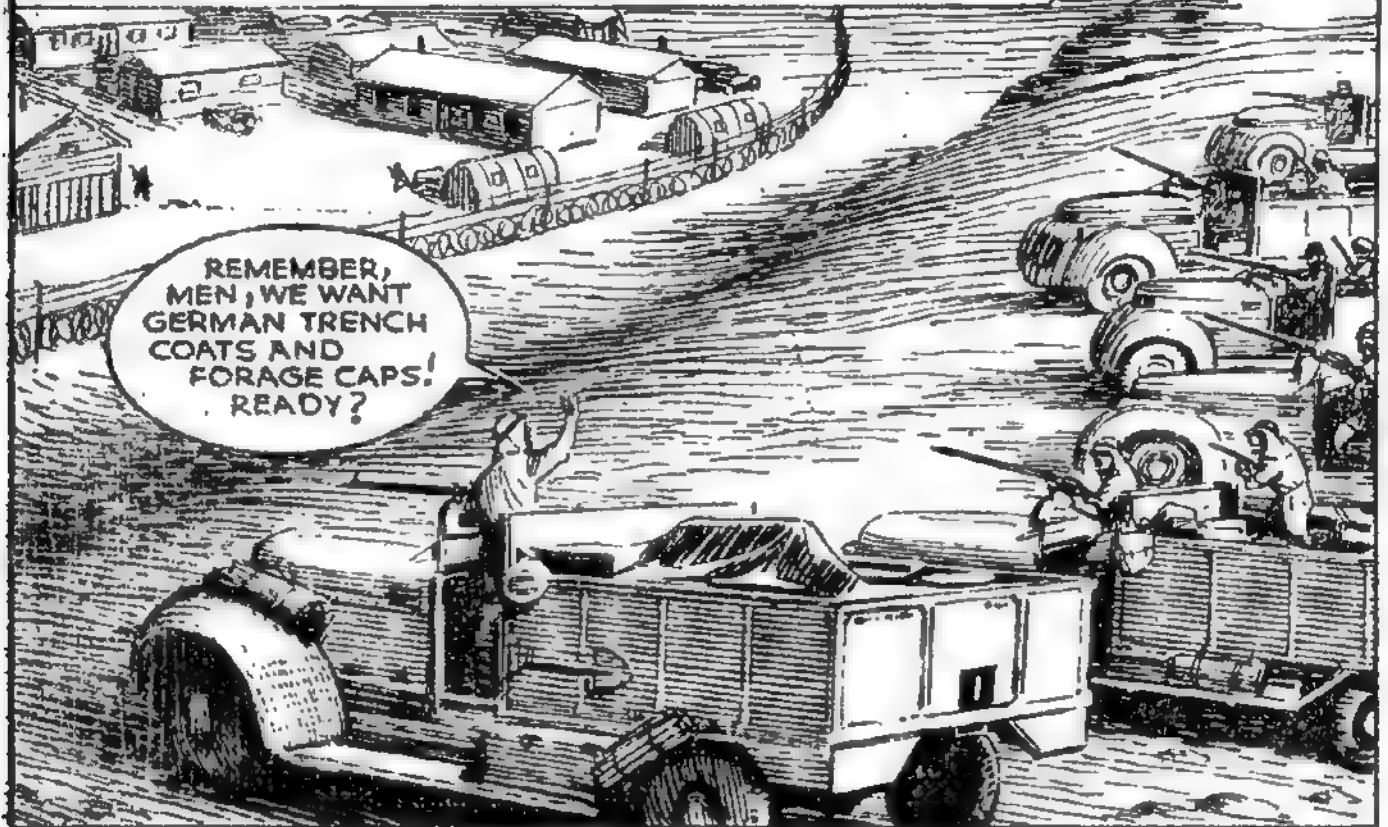
THE COLONEL'S PLAN WAS A
HAIR-RAISING ONE! IT WOULD
NEED IRON NERVES TO CARRY
IT OUT... BUT BILL MACDONALD
DID NOT HESITATE...

WE PASSED AN ITALIAN SUPPLY DEPOT
NINETY MILES BACK, MEN! WE'RE
GOING TO BURGLE IT! WE'VE GOT
TO BE THERE AT DAWN TOMORROW,
SO GET MOVING!



Desert Patrol

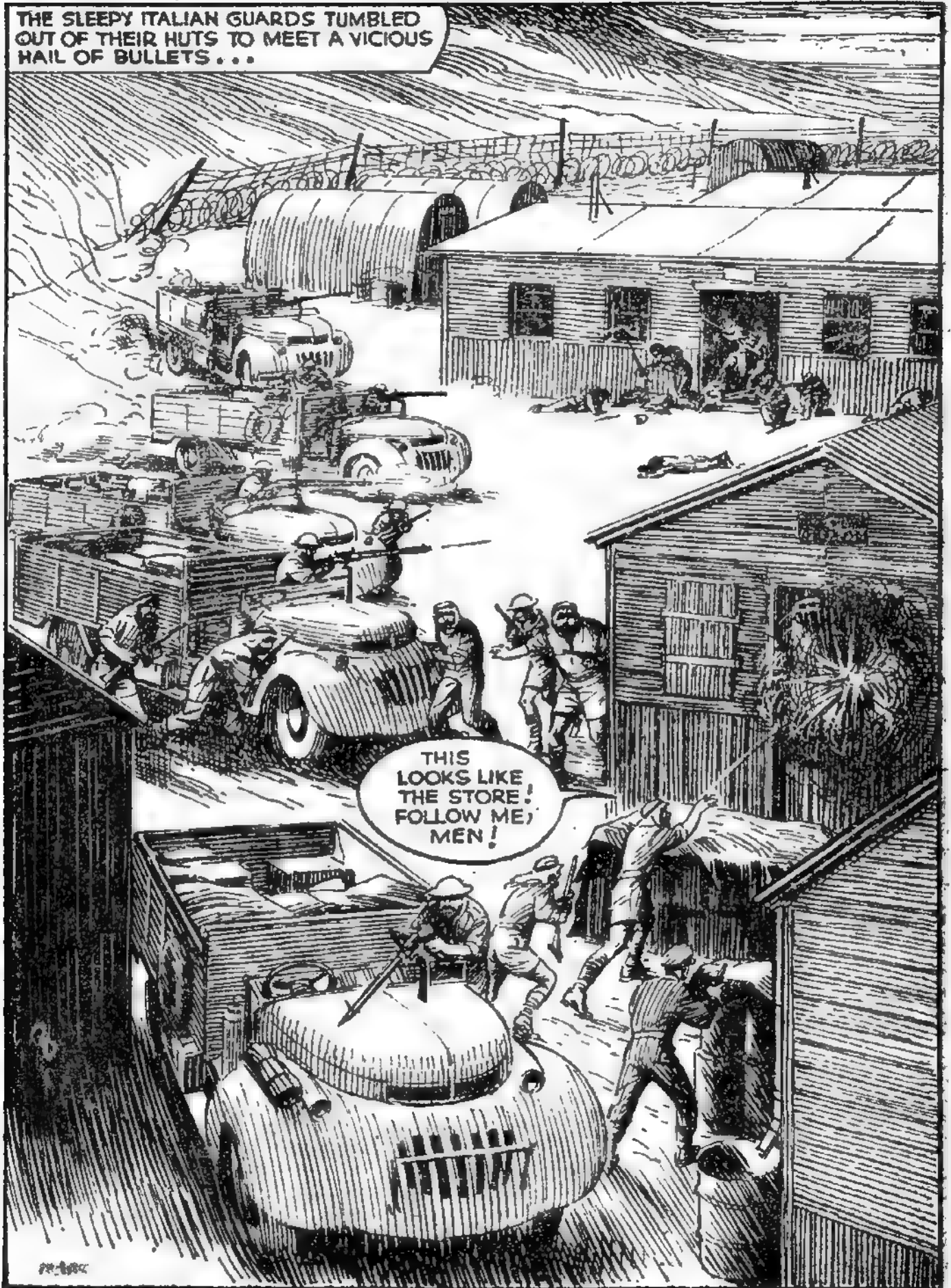
ALL THAT DAY, THE SIX TRUCKS ROARED BACK ACROSS THE DESERT. THEY SPENT THE NIGHT TEN MILES FROM THE SUPPLY DEPOT. DAWN FOUND THEM POISED FOR THE ATTACK!



SIX GEARS SLAMMED HOME, SIX SNARLING TRUCKS LUNGED AT THE ENEMY OUTPOST, SPITTING LEAD AND FLAME...



THE SLEEPY ITALIAN GUARDS TUMBLED
OUT OF THEIR HUTS TO MEET A VICIOUS
HAIL OF BULLETS...



THE GRENADE BURST AGAINST THE DOOR OF THE HUT AND SHATTERED IT! GUN READY, MAC STEPPED COOLLY FORWARD.

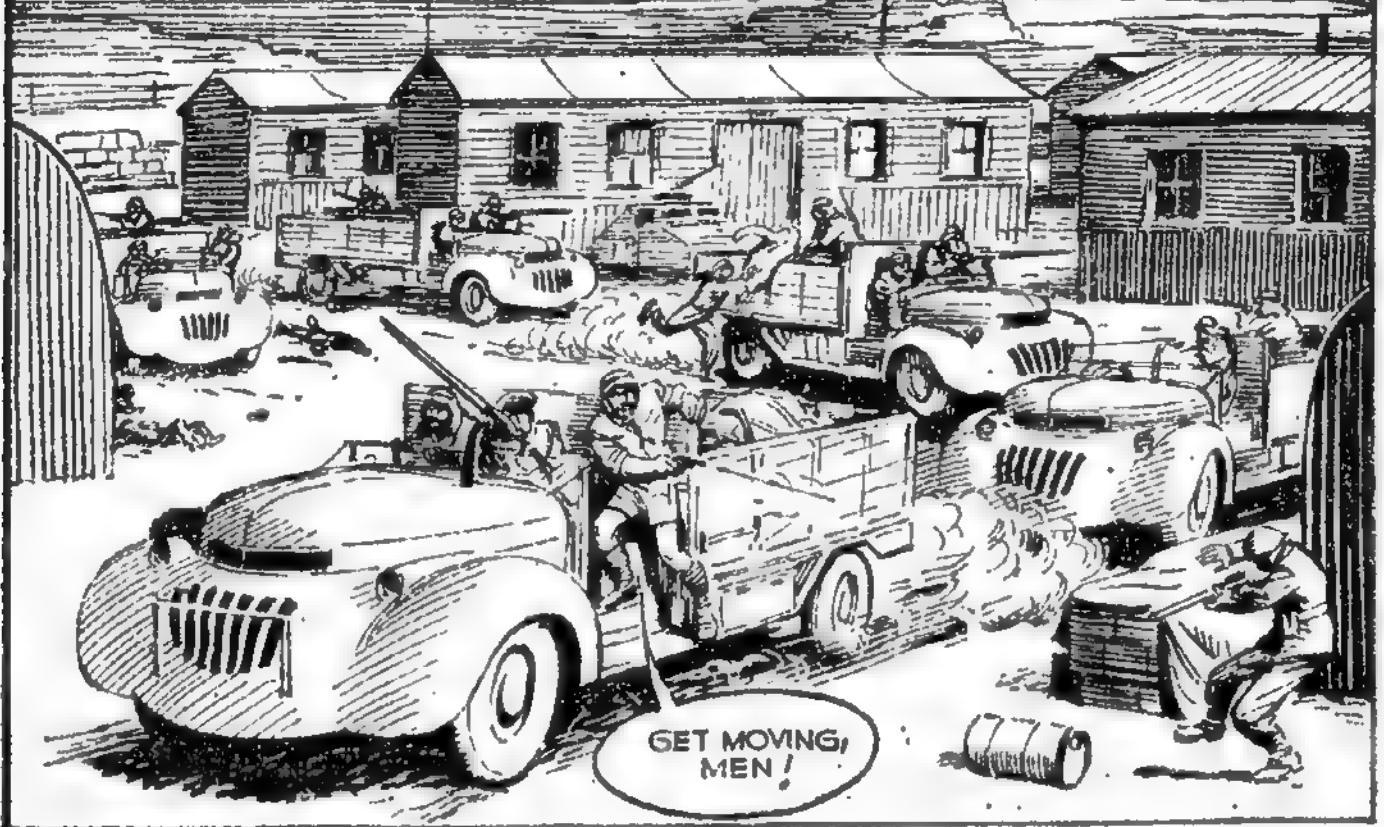


INSIDE THE HUT, THE MEN WORKED FAST, TAKING ALL THE GERMAN GREATCOATS THEY COULD LAY HANDS ON... OUTSIDE THE CLATTERING MACHINE GUNS KEPT THE GUARDS AT BAY...

LET'S HOPE THEY FIT, COLONEL!



IN FIVE MINUTES, THE LIGHTNING RAID WAS OVER AND THE SIX TRUCKS SWUNG ROUND FOR THE GETAWAY...




BACK INTO THE DESERT ROARED THE TRUCKS, TAKING WITH THEM A FEW BULLET HOLES, A PILE OF GERMAN ARMY GREATCOATS...AND SOME VERY PUZZLED MEN!



Desert Patrol

AS THE BLAZING DISC OF THE SUN SANK BELOW THE DESERT, THE PATROL REACHED THEIR LEAGUER THIRTY MILES SOUTH OF ENEMY HELD TOBRUK.

RIGHT, MEN,
HIDE THE TRUCKS...
WE'RE TOO NEAR THE
JERRY BASE CAMP TO
TAKE CHANCES!



WHEN THE MEN HAD REFRESHED THEMSELVES, MAC BEGAN TO ADDRESS THEM. THEIR EYES WIDENED...

RIGHT, GET THIS, MEN! WE'RE STAYING
HERE FOR ONE DAY...AND THE COLONEL'S
GOING TO GIVE YOU MARCHING DRILL!
FURTHERMORE, TOMORROW NIGHT
EVERY MAN WILL SHAVE OFF
HIS BEARD!

CRUIKEY!



IN THE ICY DARKNESS OF THE DESERT NIGHT, THE MEN UNEASILY PONDERED THEIR LEADER'S STRANGE ORDERS...

WHAT'S UP WITH THE CAPTAIN, SMITHY? I THOUGHT WE WERE GOING TO ATTACK THOSE JERRY GUNS, NOT START SQUARE-BASHING!

MAC'S GOT HIS REASONS, NOBBY... I HOPE!

DISGRUNTLED AND PUZZLED THE PATROL FELL IN FOR ITS FIRST DRILL IN TWO YEARS OF TOUGH DESERT FIGHTING...

YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE THIS SERIOUSLY, MEN, HEAR THAT! ALL RIGHT, COLONEL, THE PATROL'S YOURS.

THANK YOU, CAPTAIN!



Desert Patrol

THOUGH THE MEN SCOWLED AND SWORE, THERE WAS NOTHING FOR IT BUT TO OBEY THE STEEL-HARD BARK OF THE COLONEL!



FOR FIVE HOURS IN THE TORRID SUN, THE COLONEL DRILLED HIS IRON DISCIPLINE INTO THOSE FREE-AND-EASY DESERT WARRIORS...



AT THE END, MUTINOUS AND WEARY, THE MEN HEARD THE CRUELLEST ORDER OF ALL ... FROM THEIR OWN LEADER.

DISMISS!

RIGHT, MEN, NOW GET THOSE BEARDS OFF!



FOR PERHAPS THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE TRAGIC ACTION OUTSIDE TOBRUK, THE COLONEL PERMITTED HIMSELF A SMILE!

YOU'LL HAVE A MUTINY ON YOUR HANDS IF YOU DON'T TELL THEM THE REASON FOR THIS SOON, CAPTAIN!

THEY'RE PROUD DEVILS, COLONEL! THEY'VE GOT TO BE TO FIGHT IN THIS DESERT AND LIVE! I'LL TALK TO THEM SOON.



LATER, THE MEN
GATHERED, REBELLIOUSLY
CLEAN-SHAVEN, TO
HEAR THEIR LEADER...

A FRONTAL ATTACK ON THESE GUNS WOULD
BE SUICIDE, MEN! THE COLONEL'S PLAN IS
SIMPLE... WE WAIT UNTIL DAWN AND THEN
WE MARCH STRAIGHT IN! WE SHALL WEAR
GERMAN TRENCH COATS AND FORAGE
CAPS, WE SHALL STEP OUT LIKE PUKKA
SOLDIERS THANKS TO THE COLONEL'S
TUITION! AND ONCE INSIDE THE
CAMP... WE BECOME
PATROL Q-ONE AGAIN!



AS BILL MACDONALD UNFOLDED THE PLAN,
SLOW GRINS BROKE OVER THE TOUGH
FACES OF HIS MEN. SO THERE WAS
TO BE A FIGHT AFTER ALL...

COR! I THOUGHT
OLD MAC
HAD GONE OFF HIS
ROCKER!

I'LL TAKE IT OUT OF THOSE
JERRIES TOMORROW, MAKING
ME SHAVE OFF MY
BEARD TO GET INTO
THEIR BLOOMIN'
CAMP!



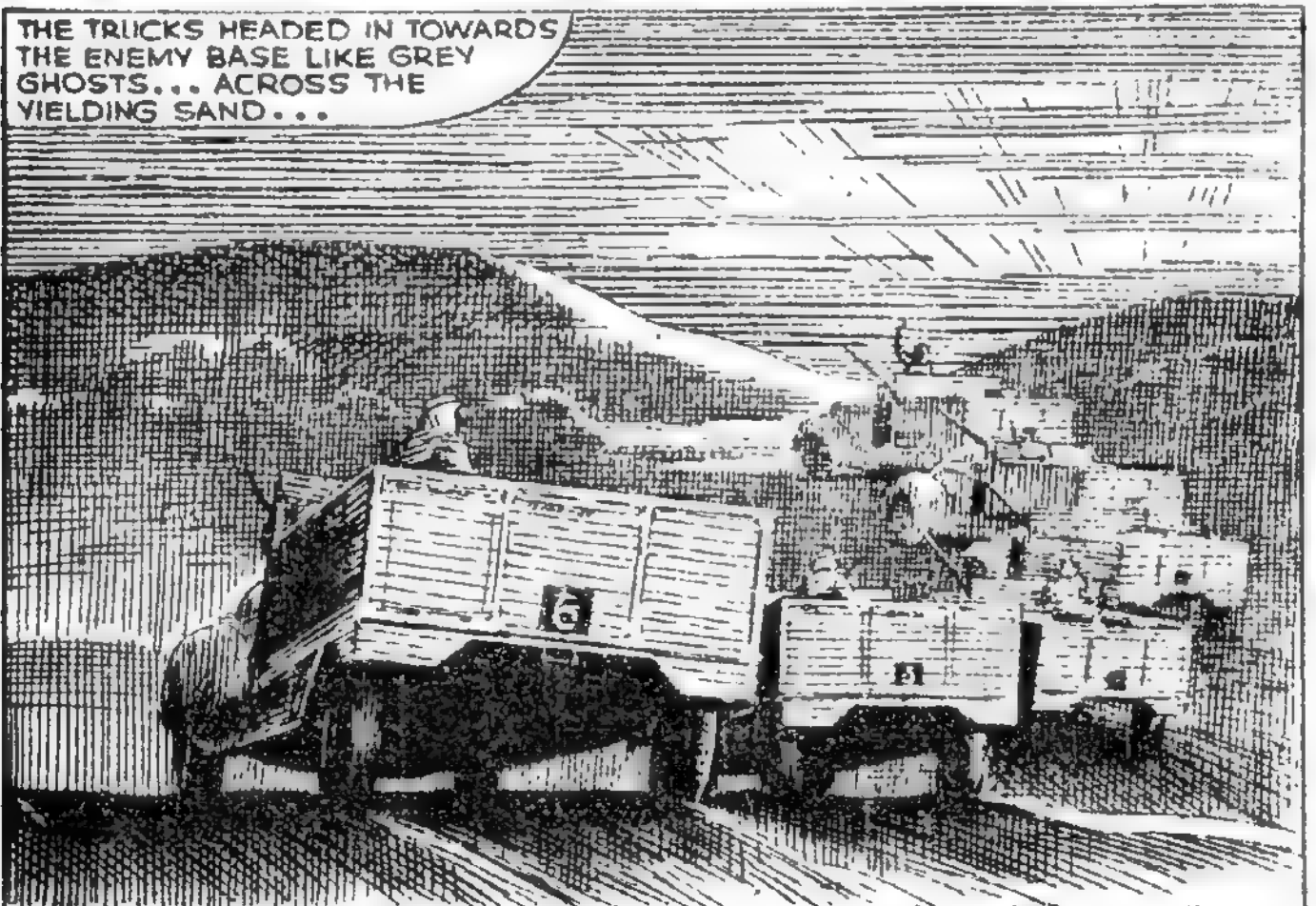
THE MEN SLEPT EASILY. THEY HAD LEARNED THE VALUE OF REST BEFORE BATTLE AND IN THE HALF-DARKNESS BEFORE THE DAWN...

WE LEAVE THE TRUCKS THREE MILES FROM THE BASE CAMP AND MARCH THE REST OF THE WAY! UNDERSTAND?

OKAY, SIR!



THE TRUCKS HEADED IN TOWARDS THE ENEMY BASE LIKE GREY GHOSTS... ACROSS THE YIELDING SAND...



Chapter 5.

UNCHALLENGED

IN THIS MOMENT BEFORE THE HAZARDOUS ATTEMPT ON THE BIG GUNS, THE MEN WERE MOMENTARILY SILENT... BUT THEIR LEADER'S VOICE WAS AS COOL AS EVER!

IF WE'RE CAUGHT WEARING THESE JERRY UNIFORMS, WE'LL BE SHOT... SO MARCH SMARTLY AND DON'T GET CAUGHT! WE'LL TAKE THE COATS OFF BEFORE WE START WORK INSIDE!



ONE LAST TASK REMAINED. THE DRIVER OF EACH TRUCK STOOPED TO THE SAND BESIDE HIS VEHICLE...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING, SERGEANT?

WE BURY THE DISTRIBUTOR ROTOR ARM IN THE SAND BY THE FRONT OFFSIDE WHEEL WHEN WE LEAVE THE TRUCKS IN THE DESERT, SIR! THEY'RE IMMOBILIZED IF THE JERRIES FIND 'EM, BUT WE CAN START THEM AGAIN WHEN WE WANT TO!



IN THE UNEASY LIGHT,
THE MEN FORMED A
COLUMN. THE ATTACK
HAD ALMOST BEGUN...



ALL READY,
COLONEL! MOVE
FAST NOW, MEN, UNTIL
WE NEAR THE JERRY
CAMP! THE COLONEL
WILL GIVE THE
ORDER TO
MARCH!

FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER, THE DISGUISED
PATROL HAD REACHED THE PERIMETER ROAD
A MILE FROM THE GERMAN CAMP...



ALL
RIGHT, MEN,
MARCH!

NOW THE FIRST MOMENT OF PERIL APPROACHED! A GERMAN STAFF CAR SWEPT TOWARD THE MARCHING COLUMN! WOULD THE DAREDEVIL ATTEMPT BE UNMASKED BEFORE IT HAD BEGUN...

ACH, GENERAL, JUST ANOTHER OF OUR SO-ACTIVE PATROLS RETURNING FROM A NIGHT RECONNAISSANCE! YOU SEE WE TAKE NO CHANCES WITH YOUR SPLENDID GUNS!



ALL WAS WELL! THE STAFF CAR, AND ITS COMPLACENT ENEMY OCCUPANTS, GLIDED UNSUSPECTINGLY PAST! BILL MACDONALD HEAVED A SIGH OF RELIEF...

THANK HEAVEN FOR THE COLONEL AND THE OLD BARRACK SQUARE!



BUT THE MOST DANGEROUS TEST LAY AHEAD, AT THE BARBED WIRE PERIMETER OF THE CAMP. THERE WERE DRY MOUTHS IN THE MARCHING COLUMN...



THE GERMAN CORPORAL OF THE GUARD WAS SLEEPY AND IRRITABLE AFTER A BORING NIGHT OF DUTY... WHAT WAS LIKELY TO HAPPEN HERE AT THE BASE CAMP, FAR AWAY FROM THE ENEMY...

THESE MEN;
DO YOU KNOW
WHO THEY ARE,
CORPORAL?

GERMANS;
YOU IDIOT!
WHO ELSE WOULD
THEY BE A HUNDRED
MILES FROM THE
FRONT LINE?



STILL MARCHING WITH COOL PRECISION BEHIND THE RAMROD BACK OF THE COLONEL, PATROL QI PASSED UNCHALLENGED INTO THE HEART OF THE ENEMY CAMP!



ONCE BEHIND THE BLANK WALL OF THE HUT, A LIGHTNING TRANSFORMATION BEGAN! THE STOLID GERMAN SOLDIERS BECAME TOUGH AND DAREDEVIL BRITISH DESERT RAIDERS...

GET CRACKING, MEN! ONE OF YOU TO EACH GUN WITH THE CHARGES, THE REST OF YOU HOLD OFF THE JERRIES!



TEN MEN LEAPED TOWARDS THE BIG GUNS, WITH THE HIGH EXPLOSIVE CHARGES! THE REST TURNED VICIOUSLY AT BAY AS THE FIRST GERMAN RIFLE CRACKED!



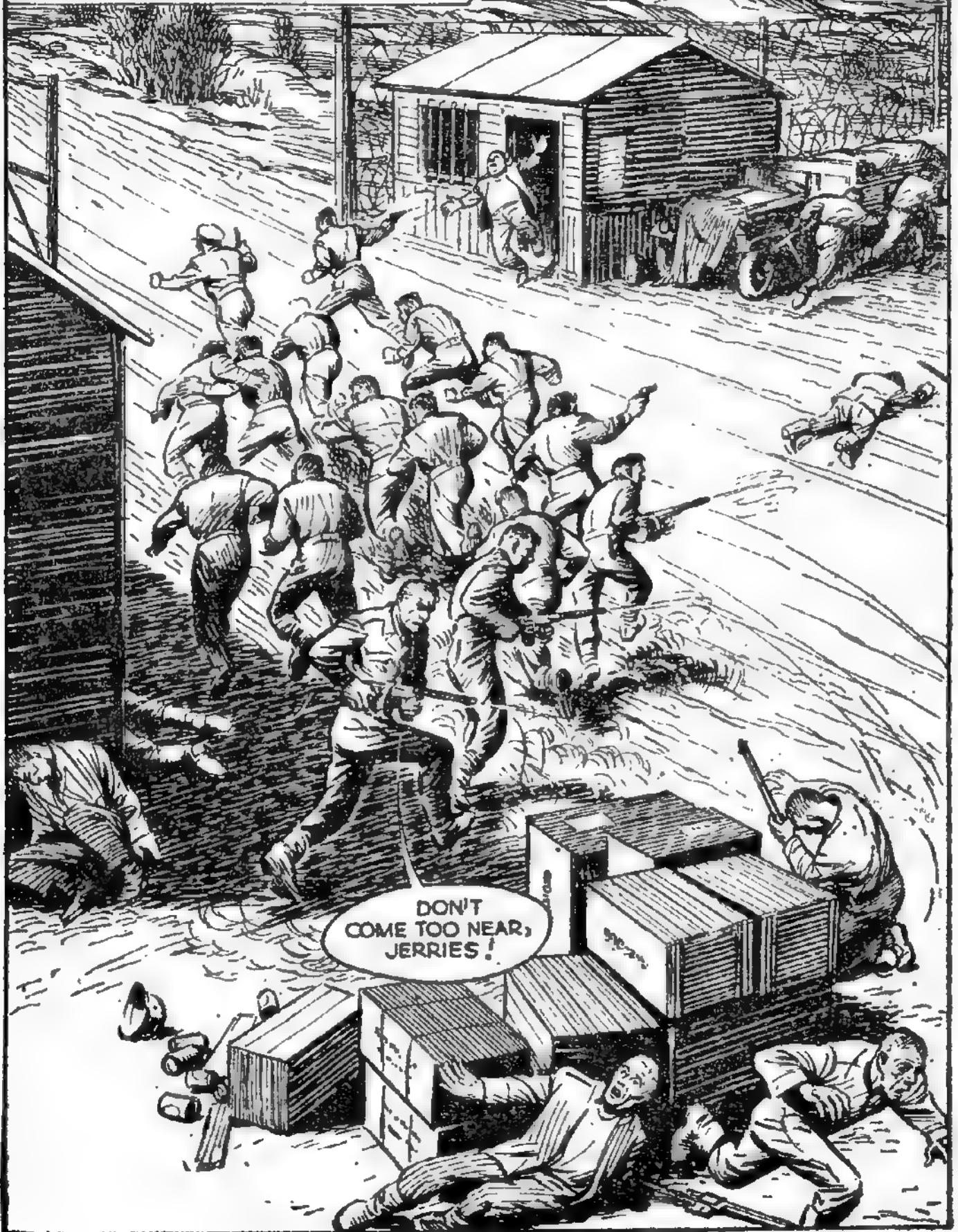
MORE GERMAN SOLDIERS CAME RUNNING UP...TO BE MET BY A FURIOUS WALL OF LEAD FROM THE MEN OF THE L.R.D.G.!



BUT ALREADY THE MAIN TASK HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT... THE VITAL GERMAN GUNS WERE DOOMED!



NOW THE INTREPID MEN WHO HAD SLIPPED
SO QUIETLY INTO THE HORNET'S NEST, HAD
TO FIGHT THEIR WAY OUT AGAIN!



MOST OF THE GERMAN TROOPS HAD BEEN CAUGHT SLEEPILY UNAWARES BY THE LIGHTNING RAID. THE REST WERE DAUNTED BY THE FEROCITY OF THE BRITISH ATTACK!



THE SMALL PATROL HAD LOST SOME BRAVE MEN IN THAT DEADLY BATTLE... BUT IT HAD DESTROYED THE TARGET AND REACHED THE FREEDOM OF THE DESERT!



PANTING, THE L.R.D.G. MEN FLUNG THEMSELVES DOWN BEHIND A SANDY HILLOCK. BEHIND THEM, THE SKY WAS STAINED WITH SMOKE FROM THE WRECKED GUNS!

THEY'RE BRINGING OUT ARMOURD CARS, BUT THEY'RE HEADING THE WRONG WAY! GIVE THEM HALF A MINUTE AND THEN MAKE FOR THE TRUCKS...FAST!



HELPING THEIR WOUNDED, THE MEN OF GI PATROL MADE A LAST BREATHLESS DASH FOR SAFETY...



Desert Patrol

THE FREEDOM OF THE DESERT LAY AHEAD... THE BLAZING WRECKAGE OF TEN VITAL GERMAN GUNS BEHIND...



AS THE TRUCKS OF THE PATROL HEADED FAST FOR THE BRITISH LINES, THE COLONEL AND THE CAPTAIN LOOKED AT EACH OTHER AND GRINNED!



EACH HAD PLAYED HIS PART IN A HAZARDOUS OPERATION, EACH HAD LEARNED THROUGH THE VIOLENCE OF BATTLE TO RESPECT THE OTHER! WHEN CAIRO HAD BEEN SAFELY REACHED THEY MADE THEIR FAREWELLS.

SO LONG, COLONEL! WE MUST WORK TOGETHER AGAIN SOME TIME!



TWO MONTHS LATER, AS THE EIGHTH ARMY GATHERED ITSELF FOR THE FINAL CRUSHING DEFEAT OF ROMMEL'S AFRIKA KORPS AT EL ALAMEIN, THE TWO MEN MET AGAIN.

HALLO, COLONEL! WE'RE ATTACHED TO YOUR BATTALION—DID YOU KNOW?

I ARRANGED IT, CAPTAIN!



AS THE COLONEL PROUDLY WATCHED THE L.R.D.G. PATROL GO PAST, HIS YOUNG FELLOW-OFFICER FROWNE IN SHARP DISAPPROVAL...

I SAY, SIR,
WE'RE NOT WORKING
WITH THAT GANG
OF RUFFIANS,
ARE WE?



THE COLONEL'S VOICE WAS AS STERN AS IT HAD BEEN ONCE BEFORE IN THE HIDEOUT AT MARBLE ARCH... BUT THE WORDS HAD CHANGED!

BE GLAD
YOU'RE FIGHTING
ON THE SAME SIDE
AS THOSE MEN, YOU
YOUNG PUPPY! THEY'RE
THE FINEST SOLDIERS
IN THE EIGHTH
ARMY!



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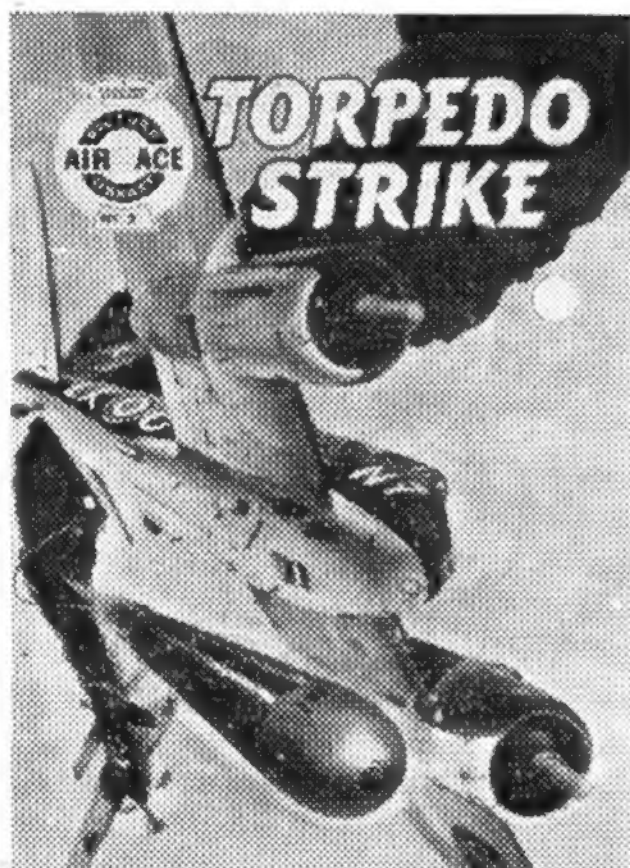
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